

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 3869

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (MONDALE, WALTER F.), AU
SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE VISIT TO VIENNA: MIDDLE EAST

1. CHARGE CALLED ON CHANCELLOR KREISKY MAY 11 TO DISCUSS
ARRANGEMENTS AND SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF VICE PRESIDENT
MONDALE'S VISIT.

2. IN RESPONSE TO THE CHARGE'S QUESTION AS TO THE
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES HE HAD PRIMARILY IN MIND FOR
DISCUSSION WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT, KREISKY MENTIONED
THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, EAST-WEST RELATIONS, AND THE
MIDDLE EAST, IN THAT ORDER. HOWEVER, HE ENLARGED ONLY
ON THE MIDDLE EAST, GIVING AT SOME LENGTH THE IMPRESSIONS
GAINED DURING HIS RECENT MEETINGS WITH ASSAD, SADAT
AND ARAFAT.

3. THE MAIN POINT HE WISHED TO STRESS ON THE MIDDLE EAST,
KREISKY SAID, WAS THE REMARKABLE AND DEEP CHANGE OF
ATTITUDE TOWARD THE U.S. WHICH HE DETECTED IN THE ARAB
WORLD GENERALLY. THERE WERE, OF COURSE, VARIATIONS
FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY. HE HAD BEEN MOST STRUCK
BY THE CHANGE IN SYRIA. ASSAD HAD TOLD HIM WITH
SATISFACTION OF THE ENLARGED SYRIAN CONTACTS WITH THE
U.S. KREISKY SAID HE HAD NOT ENCOUNTERED DISAGREEMENT
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IN ANY QUARTER, INCLUDING ARAFAT, WITH THE PROPOSITION
HE ADVANCED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WAS SEEKING A MIDDLE
EAST SETTLEMENT THAT WOULD BE EQUITABLE TO ALL THE
PARTIES. THIS MARKED A SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE FROM THE
PAST, KREISKY SAID, WHEN HE MET WITH DEEP SUSPICIONS
ABOUT U.S. GOOD FAITH.

4. KREISKY SAID A MAIN FACTOR FOR CHANGE IN ARAB ATTITUDES WAS THE ARMS BURDEN AND THE NEVER-ENDING PROBLEM OF MODERNIZATION AND REPLACEMENT. THE BURDEN WAS SO HEAVY THAT ARAB LEADERS WERE INCREASINGLY DRAWN TOWARD EXPLORING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR WAS THE INCREASING DISILLUSIONMENT OF THE PALESTINIANS WITH THE ARAB WORLD. THE PALESTINIANS WERE FED UP BEING TREATED AS "THE NEW JEWS," AND WHILE THERE WERE STILL RADICAL PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS, ARAFAT WAS CLEARLY INTERESTED IN NEGOTIATIONS. STILL ANOTHER FAVORABLE ELEMENT, IN KREISKY'S VIEW, WAS THAT THE RUSSIANS FAVOR A PEACEFUL PALESTINIAN SOLUTION. FINALLY, KREISKY SAID HE HAD SOME REASON TO BELIEVE THAT EVEN A RADICAL ARAB STATE LIKE IRAQ WOULD ACCEPT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

5. IN SUPPORT OF THE LAST POINT, KREISKY SAID VENZUELAN PRESIDENT PEREZ TOLD HIM DURING HIS RECENT VISIT IN VIENNA THAT THE IRAQI PRESIDENT HAD COMPLAINED TO HIM ABOUT THE RUSSIANS, BECAUSE "THEY WANTED PEACE", WHILE THE IRAQUIS DID NOT. KREISKY SAID HE HAD TOLD SADAT THIS DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO EGYPT, AND SADAT REPLIED THAT THIS WAS AN EXAMPLE OF IRAQI DOUBLE TALK. SADAT SAID HE WAS IN TOUCH WITH THE IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT, WHO WAS A POWERFUL FIGURE, AND HAD BEEN TOLD THAT WHILE THE IRAQIS MIGHT COMPLAIN PUBLICLY IF EGYPT MOVED TOWARD A SETTLEMENT, THEY WOULD NOT DO ANYTHING TO DISTURB IT.

6. KREISKY'S CONCLUSION, WHICH HE WILL ENLARGE ON IN HIS CONFIDENTIAL

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DISCUSSION WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT, IS THAT THE U.S. HAS NOW, WITH THE IMPORTANT CHANGES HE DESCRIBED IN THE ARAB WORLD, A UNIQUE CHANCE, AND PROBABLY A TRANSIENT ONE, OF BRINGING ABOUT A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. THE MAIN QUESTION MARK IS ISRAEL, AND, KREISKY CONVEYED, HERE THE U.S. ROLE IS CRUCIAL. MEEHAN

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